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The Biblical

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Critical Views

of

Israel's Religion

by

Prof. James Orr, D.D.

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The Biblical and Critical Views of Israel's Religion

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BY

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The Biblical and Critical Views of Israel's Religion.

The subject this evening is, "The Biblical and Critical Views of Israel's Religion." The terms in the title I have used imply that there is a Biblical view of Israel's religion, and a critical view of Israel's religion, and that these two are not the same, that indeed they are in conflict with each other. Now, that is the position I wish to substantiate this evening, and I wish also to give some reasons for adhering to what I call the Biblical view, and for rejecting what I call the critical view.

Just permit me a word or two at the commencement. This lecture which I purpose giving to-night should have come in at the beginning of my programme a week or two ago, but owing to causes beyond my own control, I could not give it. I mention this because I think if I had been able to carry out my programme as I designed, a good many of the difficulties which some people appear to have felt in regard to my meaning and critical position, and many other things, might have been avoided. I am pretty sure they would; and I hope most will feel, while I cannot touch on everything—for I can only touch at best the fringe of the great subject—there will not be much ambiguity left about my position at the close of this evening's address. A good many questions were sent up in writing on previous evenings. Perhaps my simplest way will be to try to anticipate answers to these questions as far as I can in the address I am to give. There is

just one other point. You may have observed that a friend of mine—Dr. Jordan, of Kingston—has been at the trouble to insert a criticism of my position, or what he regards as a criticism of it, in nearly all the newspapers. I gave a lecture on this subject on which I am speaking to-night, in Kingston last Friday evening, and Dr. Jordan at the close of that lecture read a paper in criticism of my positions and made a number of remarks. I wish the whole of that paper, or at any rate, if it was not in the paper, the whole of the remarks had been printed. The paper as it stands after all consists very much of generalities one can hardly touch with any effect. Now, I have endeavoured in all these discussions and addresses to keep clear, as far as I could, of any personal controversy, and I do not mean, even under the pressure of Dr. Jordan's criticism, to depart from that rule. It is not men I am dealing with; it is a large movement, a great movement, the documents of which are before us, which is being advocated by men on the Continent of Europe and on both sides of the Atlantic in our own lands. It is that movement which I wish to speak of, and ask you to give fair and impartial judgment upon. You must not be turned aside from that by anything like detailed personal controversy. And yet I feel it would hardly be fair to you or to myself if I did not, as I go along, at least refer to one or two points which are brought up in that criticism; and as Dr. Jordan also seems to share that fatal difficulty in understanding what I mean, try at any rate to make clear what my position is.

As to this difficulty about knowing what I mean, it is a little hard on a man who has written two or three large books on the subject, and innumerable articles, to

try and make plain what he means, to find that people after all have such difficulty in understanding him. I have many faults as a thinker and a writer, but I am not generally blamed for want of lucidity. I generally know what I mean myself, and know how to state what I mean. There seems to be no great difficulty over here in most people understanding what I mean, and I am quite sure that if the friends had only taken the trouble—if they were in real difficulty—to open my books and spend from ten minutes to half an hour on them, they would find the solution of most of their difficulties. However, I cannot expect people to read books just to clear up what they don't find in half an hour or three-quarters of an hour's address, and so I will try to make perfectly clear to-night what I mean.

I have said that I believe there is a contrast between the Biblical view of Israel's Religion and the critical view, and that is the first point that Dr. Jordan touches upon. He takes exception to that, and does not admit that there is a contrast between the Biblical and the critical view. Well, here is one point on which I join issue with him at the very beginning, and it surprises me that he should have thought of challenging that statement, because nothing can be more certain, nothing can be surer—I should be surprised if you do not agree with me when I have finished—nothing can be surer, than that the view of Israel's history and religion given in the Bible is a totally different thing from the view of Israel's history and religion given in the text-books of this new critical school. Dr. Franz Delitzsch has described the character of this new theory, what is called the Wellhausen theory, by saying that its effect has been to lift off its hinges the history, the worship and litera-

ture in Israel as hitherto accepted. And that I take to be the truth. What was at the top, as we shall see, it shifts to the bottom. It is not, however, simply a change of place that is in question. The new theory not only inverts the Bible's own account of Israel's history and institutions, it cancels that history in large part altogether, and proposes for acceptance another wholly reconstructed view of the development of religious ideas and laws among the Hebrews. Now, there need be no dispute about that being the case. You will see it as we go on, but it is a thing that I did not understand there was any difference of opinion about. Here is one sentence. This view of the real religion of Israel which lies before us in the Bible as it stands, what I call the Biblical view, it has come to be the fashion to speak of as the traditional view. And I read here, "It is no use attempting to minimize the difference between the traditional view and the critical view of the Old Testament. The difference is immense. They involve different conceptions of the relation of God to the world, different views as to the course of Israel's history, the process of revelation, and the nature of inspiration." "Oh," you say to me, "don't quote these extreme men." That is a sentence from Dr. Jordan's book—and you will understand how plainly it puts the issue that I am presenting to you.

Now, I think this is a point to be emphasized at the outset, namely, that this book, the Bible, proposed to be subjected to this ordeal, does not come to the trial without having something to say for itself on the points at issue. This investigation of Israel's history and religion does not take place in vacuo. The slate is not clean at the commencement of the critics' proceedings.

The Bible has a character, an identity, a witness of its own which must be taken account of in any examination of its claims. The Bible comes into court with very distinct claims. You have only to open it to see that. It professes to be a history of revelation. It gives itself out as a record of God's dealings with men in revelation from the beginning. It unfolds the course of that revelation through its successive dispensations. It begins there with the patriarchal period after the early chapters, and tells of those covenants of God and promises which laid the foundation for the whole development. It goes on to tell of the fulfilment of those in the Exodus, in God's calling of His people out of Egypt and forming them into a people for Himself and giving them the land that had been promised, and giving them His laws and institutions.

It has its own account to give of the origin of those laws and institutions. Its narrative is connected with historic names—Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, the Prophets—and it culminates in Jesus Christ, the Goal of the whole. This history of the Bible has an organic, progressive character. It is charged with deep ideas. It moves forward under the impulse of a Divine indwelling purpose that cannot, I take it, be eliminated from its parts without destroying the sequence of the whole. Now, it is open to the critic, if he pleases, to disprove this history and character of the Bible. But it cannot simply be ignored or treated as if the claim were not true. The critic cannot be allowed in oblivion of all this to build up a theory of the origin and course of Israel's history and religion as if nothing was already given. And yet, as I shall try to show you, this is precisely what the modern criticism and its most eminent

Evolution is Revelation

representatives do. Professor Jordan in this paper of his says that I attack all schools of critics. These are his words. Everyone in this room knows that that is not a correct statement. I have not attacked all critics, and I recognize the place and legitimate use of criticism. But it does not follow that therefore I must accept a criticism, a kind of criticism, which, as I regard it, is based upon the principle of natural evolution foreign to the true idea of revelation in the Bible, and which results in its working out in the laying of the whole history of the Bible and its institutions in ruins, as I believe this does. And there is no great difficulty in seeing, I think, how I should accept criticism, the necessity of criticism, and yet separate myself entirely from this kind of criticism.

You say, "Well, but that is not the kind of criticism we have to deal with here. Leave that kind of criticism alone and take the criticism of the believing men among us, men who believe in Divine revelation. Let those German men alone and deal with the men among ourselves who will tell you, who no doubt most sincerely do tell you, that they believe in a revelation culminating in Jesus Christ." Now, what I have got to say about that is, so far as these friends believe in Divine supernatural revelation culminating in Jesus Christ, there is no difference between them and myself. But then my point is that they join with this evangelical belief of theirs—which has come to them, I venture to say, from a totally different quarter, come to them from their training and upbringing in a totally different school of things—they seek to join with it, combine with it, and unite with it a theory of things that is radically opposite to it in principle. They take over the results

of a theory which springs from a totally different principle.

THE BIBLE IS A BOOK THAT IS SUPERNATURAL

from beginning to end. Everyone, I think, will admit that. But the theory of revelation which underlies this newer criticism is a totally different kind of thing. Professor Jordan—just to refer to him—says in this paper of his (referring to me) that I accept progressive revelation; and contends that these words are meaningless unless I accept the meaning that he gives them. Now, so far from admitting progressive revelation, in his sense of the word, I take it that his progressive revelation is the subversion of the progressive revelation that we have exhibited to us in the Bible. I find progressive revelation in the Bible from germinal promise on to fulfilment in Jesus Christ. I find there progressive revelation through patriarchal dispensation and mosaic dispensation and through prophecy up till the coming of Jesus Christ Himself and the full illumination by the Spirit in the meaning of the Gospel. I accept progressive revelation in that sense; but, as we shall see immediately, the method of this new school, starting from a totally different conception of revelation, denying revelation in that sense, has no alternative but to sweep practically away the whole history of the Bible as we have it, and to substitute another of totally different character for it.

Professor Jordan said he believes in progressive revelation, and he explained his meaning in his remarks on Friday evening. I am sorry his explanation is not included with some other things he said in this paper he has published. What he said in explanation when

pressed upon the matter, was that to him the development of the human mind, the development of the religious mind of man, might be looked at from two sides. On one side it was a revelation; on the other side it was human development; but the human development—the development of man's mind, the development of man's spirit, of his religious spirit, the development of those religious powers in man, the thoughts and ideas of God that spring from it—this is the same thing as revelation. And it is only in that sense that he would admit revelation. Now, that idea of revelation I take to be totally inadequate. And yet it is in that sense, and that alone, that he would admit revelation. I ventured to ask how he would carry that through and apply it to Jesus Christ, and I certainly did not get a satisfactory answer. The method of this new theory, as I understand it, and as I see it—and I think I know it pretty well—the method is one which compels rejection almost in toto of the history of revelation which we have in the Bible, and which brings in imagination to fill up the blank by having a new history fashioned on its own principle of religious evolution, which we are asked to accept as a substitute.

Let me give you just one example to illustrate what I mean, and then I am done with this introductory matter. It is from a writer whose "Religion of Israel" has been translated into our language and is very popular and widely read. You will find it in all our libraries and colleges. It is by the scholar Budde, and it represents in essence what you will find in numberless textbooks on the subject. Now, Budde is explaining in this book how Israel came to believe in Jehovah. According to him, Jehovah, in the time of Moses, was the title of a god new to the Israelites. Moses had become

acquainted with Jehovah among the Kenites, among whom he sojourned, and he introduced this Deity, Jehovah, or Yahveh, to the Israelites. But this Jehovah whom Moses introduced to the Israelites was not yet the Jehovah that we are familiar with in the Old Testament. How then did the Jehovah or Yahveh that Moses introduced become transformed into the Jehovah of the Old Testament? Well, he tells us that it came about in this way—by Jehovah or Yahveh absorbing the Canaanitish gods, the Baals of Canaan, into himself. That is how it happened. Here are his words: "Yahveh had not expelled or annihilated them"—that is, the Canaanitish Baals—"but had made them subject. He had divested them of their personality by absorbing them into his own person." That is how he explains it. And now mark what follows: "To be sure, neither the law nor the historical narratives, nor the prophets, say a word of all this; yet it can be proved." There is the whole method in a nutshell. Neither the law nor the historical narratives nor the prophets say a word of all this, yet it can be proved. And in my humble opinion anything could be proved in the same way.

THE THEORY IN ITS DEVELOPMENT.

Now, leaving these general remarks, let me come to speak for a little of the theory in its development, and I think I can show you there the strong contrast which subsists between it and the religion of the Bible. See, then, how it works out in regard to the development of the religion of Israel. First of all, in this theory, as everyone knows, the patriarchal period—that is, the period covered by the whole Book of Genesis—practically disappears. The patriarchal period, the lives of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the others, with the

covenants and promises, are all swept away. They are dismissed as belonging to the domain of legend. And so, in most of the newer writers on the religion of Israel—now, mark you, I am not speaking of extreme men, I am not speaking of those continental scholars, I am speaking of what you find in the text-books that are in common circulation and use among us—according to these text-books this patriarchal period, I say, wholly disappears. Certain writers, Dr. Driver, for example, recognize a kernel of historical worth in the patriarchal narratives, how much or how little is never very clear; but the prevailing tendency in these scholars is to resolve the history into tribal legend until nothing remains but vague reminiscence of tribal movements and ideas and events of a later time thrown back into the form of family history. What takes the place of patriarchal religion is a congeries of Semitic superstitions culled from many quarters. Professor Kautzsch, who is regarded as a moderate man, calls the pre-mosaic religion polydemonism, and things that at this stage God can hardly be spoken of at all. I think I am justified in saying that the critical view here, as regards this whole earlier period, stands in complete contrast to the Biblical view. So far as my own position is concerned, as you will come to see, I entirely dispute this contention. I believe that in these patriarchal histories you have the true historical development of religion. God's call of Abraham and his covenant with the fathers are true, and in the covenant and promises are laid the foundation of all that follows. I hope that is clear and leaves no ambiguity in anyone's mind. Dr. Jordan, in his book, is quite of the same view as I have just indicated. He leaves the patriarchal period out alto-

gether; he can make nothing of it. I ventured to ask him if he believed there was a word of truth in the whole thing, and he explained his meaning by suggesting that there might be more truth in saying there were a hundred Abrahams than one.

Well, we pass from the patriarchal period to the Mosaic age, and it does not fare much better. Extremes men—the very extreme men—are in doubt whether there ever was a Moses at all. Dr. Cheyne, a writer called Meyer on the Continent, and many others, take that extreme position, but that is not the usual position. There generally is an acknowledgment or recognition that there was an historical personality, a great leader and deliverer of the Israelites, called Moses. But then it does not follow, even where the personality of Moses is admitted, that the history of him given in the Pentateuch is admitted. The very opposite is the case. And here, remember, I am not dealing with extreme men, I am dealing with the commonly current, generally accepted treatment of this subject in the critical school of all shades, those who accept revelation and those who do not. The lawgiver's personality and work are held to be enveloped in the folds of late legend, through the mists of which we can make out little concerning him. All we can be sure of about Moses is that most of the things told about him did not happen. Those who go farthest regard him as a leader who, in the name of Jehovah, first gathered the tribes, or some of them—those who escaped from Egypt, because it was an escape really—gathered them into a unity, led them out of Egypt and across the Red Sea. How they got across has always been a perplexity. Wellhausen, in his History of Israel, tells us that by a happy coincidence the

sea was cleared by a wind at that time to let them cross. It was a happy coincidence for Israel. But they got across the Red Sea, and he pledged them at Sinai or Kadesh to some kind of a covenant with Jehovah. But who this Jehovah was, who this Yahveh was, a god of the Kenites, a new god of the Israelites, or possibly a god known earlier to some of the tribes, is again a question in dispute. The favorite view, perhaps the prevailing one, about Yahveh, this god that we call Jehovah, whom we believe revealed himself to Moses and to Israel, is that he was the storm god of Sinai. In any case, he then became the god of Israel. He was in no sense the only god, nor was he thought to be so by his worshippers. He was the god of that people, a tribal god, or at best a national god like Chemosh of Moab, and so he continued to be till the days of the prophets. I need not say that the connection of Moses with his laws is almost wholly dissolved. Moses may have given some oral decisions in the wilderness on special cases brought before him, but as for written laws or the giving is not to be thought of.

THE WORSHIP OF JEHOVAH.

What is recorded of the worship of Jehovah is mostly, we are told, post-exilian fiction. There may have been, for example, an ark, but it was probably—so Dr. Henry P. Smith says and many others—it was probably originally a fetich chest, and the two tables of stone were originally probably meteoric stones, and there may have been a rude tent to cover the ark, but assuredly not the tabernacle that we know of. The Aaronic priesthood—well, there was no such thing! Sacrifices prescribed by God—there was no such thing! Those historic feasts,

the passover and others—there was no such thing! There may have been agricultural festivals in early times, but nothing of the kind described in the Bible ever existed. You can judge for yourselves whether that is the picture given in the Bible; whether the contrast with the Bible is not obvious. The critic will say, of course, "Well, I can prove that my view is the true one and the Bible view wrong." Be it so, we will come to that; but I think I am justified in saying that the two are not the same; that there is a strong contrast between them.

I need not follow the history in the age of the conquest, which is treated pretty much as a romance, as we have it in the Book of Joshua and the early parts of Samuel. When we come to the time of Samuel the picture is largely unhistorical. There is a theocratic narrator who drapes his characters with a garb that does not belong to history. Wellhausen, for example, writing of First Samuel, seventh chapter, says, "What a pious make up this is." That is the reverent style in which the narrative is treated. And so when you come to David—well, David was no doubt a great warrior and a powerful king, a poet, and fond of music of a kind, but in no way the saint and psalmist of later tradition. David could not have written the Psalms that he is said to have done. If a man says that he cannot see why David could not have written the 51st Psalm, Professor Jordan says in his book, you are compelled to reply as politely as possible that if he did write them, anyone could write anything. That is his judgment about the Fifty-first Psalm. And yet many scholars with just as fine a sense for history and for poetry as my good friend Professor Jordan—indeed, most believing scholars until the rise of this new school twenty-five

or thirty years ago—have held that Psalm Fifty-one is a priceless chapter from David's spiritual biography, and I think they are right. I hope it is becoming clear how I differ from these critical friends.

Well, we will go on to

THE AGE OF PROPHETS.

And there we have much more worthy views. Our critical friends, many of them, treat the prophets with insight and appreciation, and even attribute to them the bringing in of the religion of Israel and the monotheistic idea, the idea of Jehovah as the one true God. And yet their idea of the prophets is not that which the prophets hold of themselves. These prophets, for example, according to this new view, were not endowed with any power of prediction in the sense of supernatural foresight. They gave bold, often shrewd forecasts of the future, which sometimes were fulfilled and oftener were not; but their teaching and their conflict and testimony for the truths of monotheism, of an ethical Jehovah, are held to mark the highest point in Old Testament religion. Now, as these ideas of the prophets gained strength, attempts were made from time to time to translate them into practice. The best known and most remarkable of these efforts was the reformation of Josiah occasioned by the discovery of the Book of Deuteronomy. In the Bible you have the narrative in II. Kings, 22nd chapter. That leads to the Book of Deuteronomy. On the critical theory, this book, which embodies older law no doubt, was composed with the express design of bringing about what is called the centralization of worship in Jerusalem in contrast to the worship of Jehovah and other gods at the high places which hitherto had been lawful. The idea is that up

till this time, as shown by the earlier history of the religion, the worship of Jehovah at high places had been lawful, but it led to many abuses. Therefore the prophets came to the view that it ought to be centralized in Jerusalem and the high places made unlawful. And so this Book of Deuteronomy was composed in order to bring about this result. It was hidden in the Temple, and then it was produced by Hilkiah the priest, and presented to Josiah, on whose mind it made an extraordinary impression. It was presented to the king; it was read to the people, and it was accepted by the people as the authentic law of Moses. Nobody seems to have doubted that it was the true law of Moses, and on the basis of it a new covenant was entered into between the king and the people of Jehovah. The effects were Josiah's crusade against the high places in Southern and Northern Israel, in Judah and in Israel, the suppression of idol worship, and the cleansing of the city and Temple from idolatry, and then when all was finished, the observance of a great Passover. That was Josiah's reformation. The enthusiasm was short lived, and the writings of the later prophets show that after Josiah's death the greater evils were all in full force again. And this brings us to the last stage. The chief and characteristic thing of this new theory that we are considering is the change of place given to

LEVITICAL LAW.

Up till the rise of this new school, those Levitical laws, the laws of Moses, priestly laws as they are called, were regarded, in their main stock at least, as among the oldest things in the Pentateuch. They were regarded as bearing indubitable marks of their origin in the wilderness, and were taken to be the oldest things in the

Mosaic history. That was the view up till lately, and it was universally accepted, except by a few writers who had advocated the opposite opinion without any favor being given to it; but now, from the time of a scholar called Graf, who published an able book in 1866, a new view began to prevail. It was a long time before it prevailed, but it came by and by to prevail, and this was the view that these Levitical laws, instead of being the oldest things in the history, are the youngest.

The settled results of the previous period were precisely reversed, and the whole Levitical code was lifted down bodily from the beginning to the end of Israel's history. The narrative part with which it was connected soon followed. It was really very much as if a man who before stood on his feet was suddenly turned over and made to stand on his head, and the result was naturally a considerable internal derangement. Vision was affected, and things generally took on a sort of upside-down look. The history was reconstructed in a new perspective, and certainly the changes were radical enough. The Mosaic period, as was said by Duhm—one of those who fought hard for this new theory and tried to get it accepted—was wiped out; the Mosaic law disappeared; the Aaronic priesthood, Levites, Passover, laws became fiction, and the whole history was reconstructed on a different plan. Now, this is the characteristic thing about this new theory of Israel's religion, as I take it—the point at which I would like to have it the beginning to the end of Israel's history. The nation had been carried away into captivity, into Babylon—this is the theory—the Temple was burned, the Ark tested more fully than it is being tested—I mean this carrying down of the Levitical law from destroyed, the ritual ended, and here came in the priests.

Up to this time there had been no ritual law at all, no definite code of laws, and now the priests began to gather for preservation what they could recall of the old worship, and they drew up a new programme of ceremonial observances for the future in case the way should be opened for them to return. So many hands set to work. Ezekial led the way in his sketch of a temple and its ordinances in the restored land. That sketch was not accepted in general, but it formed the basis upon which a system of priestly laws was drawn up. Busy brains and pens carried forward the task in the collection of old laws, the concoction of new ones, and the working up of the whole into a grand code represented as having been given by Moses in the wilderness, but really, in greater part, the fruit of their own ingenious invention. And thus arose the fabric of what is the so-called Levitical law.

You tell me, perhaps, "Now, you are giving us views of some extreme men which our sober scholars will have nothing to do with." I beg to say that that is the view of practically all the scholars of this school, and you will find it in any text-book you like to consult, and I should like to see the person who will produce these books and say that I am mistaken. Fourteen years after Ezra came to Jerusalem, that is, in the year 444 B.C., this law was read by Ezra in Jerusalem at the people's request, and it was accepted by the people then and ever after that as the law of Moses. And thus post-exilic Judaism was founded and the development of their religion was completed. Well, thus I have sketched, I think not unfairly—for I don't want to be unfair—the theory of religion as ordinarily presented by writers of this school. There are natural shadings of the picture, sometimes in a more extreme and some-

times in a more cautious direction, but the main outlines are beyond all question those which I have indicated. You can judge for yourselves whether that is the picture given in the Bible.

Now, perhaps you ask me what I have to oppose to this, and to the reasons by which the critics support them—because, of course, there is a very great deal of reasoning and argumentation in support of them.

THE LITERATURE OF THE BIBLE.

Now, I would answer in a word—it may seem a strong thing to say—but I would answer in a word from my point of view, that I oppose to it the whole literature of the Bible. The whole theory, as I regard it, is an inversion of the facts, an attempt to make a pyramid stand on its apex instead of on its base; and that is the position that I take up here. I hope it is pretty plain that I do differ from the critics on that point. Now, let me begin at the end and refer first to what I have called the cardinal position of the theory, that is the post-exilian origin of the Levitical law. I don't mean to dwell long on that, because the very first evening I was in Toronto I touched upon it as an illustration of the method, and gave some reasons for saying that it could not be accepted. You have to remember that on this new view the characteristic institutions of Israel, till Ezra promulgated them, had no existence. I don't mean that in this law book there is not gathered up a great deal of old temple usage; but, mark, that old temple usage was not definite law before it was thus codified. Now it is gathered up and it is combined with this Levitical system that had no existence before—the Ark, the Tabernacle, the Priesthood, the Priests and Levites, tithes, Levitical cities. All those

things, all those characteristic institutions, the laws and the Passover, all those things had no existence before, on this theory. When I spoke of it the other evening, a week or two ago, I asked you to try to put yourselves in the historical situation. I reminded you that the exiles had returned from Babylon and had been organized into a new community and had rebuilt their temple, and that then abuses arose. These two men, Ezra and Nehemiah, came upon the scene with their reforms. I see someone has been writing, suggesting that I should not speak about that, because really ten per cent. of the people who are hearing me don't know very much who Ezra and Nehemiah were, or anything about them. Well, of course, I am entitled to assume a little Sunday school knowledge, even, or Bible Class knowledge of these things—and if you don't know who Ezra and Nehemiah were, I may just as well stop speaking, because I cannot supply all that kind of elementary information here.

Well, I suppose you do know there were such men as Ezra and Nehemiah, and that they came upon the scene and introduced reforms into this community that had returned from Babylon. You understand the historical situation—that Ezra then produced and publicly read this law of Moses which he had brought with him from Babylon. The description is given in Nehemiah, 8th chapter, and I advise you again, as I did before, to go home and read that chapter. You will find there how Ezra in his pulpit of wood read about these laws to the people, and how they were affected by the reading of the laws. Now, remember, as I said, most of the things in this law never existed, never had been heard of before. The law itself was complicated and burdensome, and laid very heavy burdens in tithes and in other

ways upon the people. Remember, further, that that community was a deeply divided community; it was not all of one mind and one spirit; it was torn with faction; there were strong parties in it bitterly opposed to Ezra and Nehemiah and their reforms. And yet the whole community in all its sections meekly accept this new law that is brought to them and read to them, with all its burdens. They meekly accept it as the law of Moses, and submit to its burdens.

I referred to the Priests and Levites. According to this theory there were no Levites before the exile. The distinction between the Priests and Levites was made during the exile as the result of something that Ezekiel had said, and those Levites and Priests, who knew something of their own history were there, for they had their genealogies. Well now, these Levites, who had no existence before the exile, are there, and they listen to Ezra as they learn for the first time that they had been set apart in the wilderness ages before by Moses and had an elaborate tithe provision made for them, and cities set apart for them, forty-eight of them, to live in. The people hear all this, too, and some of them must have known that such cities as Levitical cities never existed. But they not only hear it; they accept all the heavy tithe burdens without a murmur, and they make a covenant with God, pledging themselves to keep everything the law prescribed.

Now, I ask you again, as I did the other week, if such a thing as that has ever been heard of before in history? Is it credible to anyone who leaves books in the study and takes a practical view of human nature? It is not, at any rate, credible to me. I brought out that point in Professor Jordan's hear-

ing; but the singular thing is that, while indulging in generalities about my not taking account of this and that, never one of these friends takes the trouble to answer the argument, to show how the thing could possibly be, how these Levites got degraded, how the Priests accepted their degradation, how the people accepted all these new things, and never a murmur, never an objection; how they accepted the whole as a genuine work, the laws of Moses coming down from antiquity. I do not believe it, and I may add from my knowledge of the developments that are going on in German thought and German writing just now, there is a larger growing school that does not believe it either. It will soon be a thing of the past, in my judgment.

Well, but the answer comes from the other side, "If that is the case, what do you make of

THE SILENCE OF THESE THINGS BEFORE THE EXILE?

And do not the prophets denounce the people for their ritual and their sacrifices, and deny that these things were instituted by Moses? Does not Jeremiah say that God did not command them after He brought them out of Egypt, about burnt offerings and sacrifices? Does not that show that there was no law in Jeremiah's time about these things?" Now, I think it would be very easy to show that while declaring that sacrifices and new moons and prayers had no value before God when unaccompanied with the right spirit—nay, were an abomination to Jehovah without that spirit; while exalting obedience above sacrifice, and moral duty above ritual, these prophets never meant to deny that, given the right spirit, sacrifices and other temple observances were an appropriate mode of worship and

acceptable to Jehovah. Why, I don't believe there was a prophet of that time that could form a conception of the worship of God that was not connected with the city and the temple and the ritual and some external means of approach to God. When Isaiah denounces these abominations in the first chapter, he represents Jehovah as saying, "Who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?" Mark particularly, they are Jehovah's courts. When Isaiah received his call in the sixth chapter, you remember it was in the temple of Jehovah that he received the call. He saw the Lord in His glory, and it was by a coal taken from the altar of burnt offering that his lips were touched and purged from their iniquity. And so with Hosea and the others. "My sacrifices," Hosea calls them, while he says that they have turned them to mere offerings of flesh. If you take those prophets and look at them further you will find this, that the greater prophets in their pictures of the future of Jerusalem—the second Isaiah (as he is called), the most spiritual of them all, included—there is not one of them, in the pictures of the restored theocracy, but inclines this feature of the sacrifices. Jerusalem is the centre; the nations come up to Jerusalem to sacrifice, and they bring their offerings and sacrifices with them. Read the 60th of Isaiah and see how they come up there with their sacrifices and offerings, and approach with the right spirit, and they are acceptable to Jehovah. And then as to the silence, where is the proof of it—if you have all that elaborate ritual against the abuse of which we are told the prophets were continually waging war?

Take the Book of Ezekiel. Why, it is saturated with priestly ideas, and with references to statutes and ordinances of God; and although our critical friends tell us

that the Levitical law is an imitation of Ezekiel, I think that common sense will come to feel that this is an inversion, a forced and unnatural inversion, of the real fact; that it is rather the source from which Ezekiel drew, and the basis on which he worked in his re-adaptation and ideal construction in his new temple. Until this new school arose, the whole body of the older scholars had no doubt of it in respect of a considerable portion of the Levitical law. Even now, Prof. Driver thinks that the section of that Levitical law, practically from Leviticus 16 to 26th chapters, existed before Ezekiel; and many scholars have held and hold and argue, as the older scholars did, that Levitical laws are involved and implied in the Book of Deuteronomy, and one chapter in Deuteronomy is almost a verbal reproduction of a chapter in Leviticus. And then when we compare the older books I do think we find evidence of the presence of many of the things that are important. The notices are often incidental, and just because incidental are, it seems to me, of greater value—the tabernacle and ark and Aaronic Priesthood and High Priests and Levites and shew-bread and sin offerings and peace offerings.

Now, when we go back and come to Deuteronomy the same kind of reasoning may be applied. The Book of Deuteronomy was found—that is the theory—in the temple in Josiah's reign, and the question is, How did it originate? Well, a good many continental scholars and some in our own country boldly advocate that it was a pious fraud. I think we may reject that, and a great many of our leading scholars of the more positive cast reject it too. But that theory is that it was a pious fraud, a deliberate concoction of the book; that it was

put in the temple, and then there was the pretending to find it. But setting that view aside, you have the book, at any rate, written for the purpose of promoting what is called the centralization of worship in Jerusalem, and it is hidden in the temple in some way or other, and then it is found and has the effect of producing this reformation. But observe that when it is found there is no doubt at all on the part of the priests or Josiah, or the people or anybody else, that it really was the old book of the law of Moses. Critics may say what they please about it, but that is how the book was accepted then. There is a difference between an old book and a new book; and if the roll or the manuscript produced in the temple had all the appearance of being a brand new thing, or a thing produced only a few years before, surely Hilkiah the Priest or somebody else would have recognized it. It must have been an old, mouldy thing or they never would have thought it was an old book, the book of the law of Moses; and I don't suppose they went and made it old-looking in order to deceive the king. If they did, then, as Dr. Stalker says about this theory, Hilkiah and the others who were implicated in this little deception were three of the shadiest characters in Jerusalem. But many of our scholars do not accept that view, and I am putting it aside.

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY.

But look now at the Book of Deuteronomy itself. It really claims in substance to be a book of Moses, the book of the law of Moses. It tells how Moses gave those addresses in Moab, and how he wrote them down at the end of his addresses, and how he handed them to the Priests, and how they put them in the ark to

be preserved; and allowing all you please for subsequent editing or subsequent reproduction or subsequent explanation, still that book claims to be in substance and in matter a book coming down from the time of Moses. And then you have that book found in Josiah's time. Now, it is said the end of it was to bring about this centralization of worship. Well, I think that is a very disputable proposition in that broad sense. A number of critical writers have arisen in Germany who do dispute it, and even go so far as to say that this dogma of the Wellhausen school is just as baseless as the old dogma of the Tübingen school about the conflict of Pauline and Petrine parties in the early church. At any rate, the idea that the object is to put down the high places and make provision for the disestablishment of the Priests of the high places—for that is the theory—is, it seems to me, without any support in the book itself. You look the Book of Deuteronomy in vain for a single reference to high places or to disestablishment of Priests of high places; and instead of making provision for them, what the book provides for anybody who is engaged in leading the people into idolatry of that kind, is that they be put to death—which is a very different thing from making provision for them at the Jerusalem temple. Then it is said that this contradicts the earlier worship of the nation. I would just like to say about that—read the law in Deuteronomy itself and see what it says. What the law in Deuteronomy says is, that when the Lord God had given the people rest from all their enemies round about, and when the Lord God had chosen a place to put His name there—chosen a sanctuary—then they were to bring their sacrifices and their offerings to that

central sanctuary. That, as we know, did not take place until the reign of David or the reign of Solomon. This law, even according to Deuteronomy itself, was not in force until that time; therefore had no applicability to the condition of things in earlier times. In those earlier times there was a central sanctuary, and the ideal all through was that of a central sanctuary. The people went up to their three feasts every year there; at least they were told to do so. And this central sanctuary was an ideal. The worship was not confined to the central sanctuary. They could offer wherever Jehovah had revealed himself and manifested himself, and on special occasions, in special circumstances, sacrifice was not prohibited. Why, the Book of Deuteronomy itself, emphasizing this central sanctuary, provides for an altar being set up on Mount Ebal, and there was no contradiction of Deuteronomic law in those earlier sacrifices. I cannot go into that more fully now.

Now, your time is exhausted, but let me say a word before I close, on another point. Permit what I have to say about the earlier part of Genesis to be left till to-morrow evening, because I have to deal then with the archaeological light thrown on the Old Testament, and I have a good deal to say about the Patriarchal age in that time. I will only now say that while on the new theory the Patriarchal age is blotted out, it seems to me that in reality nothing had a deeper or firmer hold on the consciousness of Israel than this faith in God's dealings with their fathers. Take Deuteronomy, take the histories, take the prophets—you find that everything goes back to God's covenant and dealing with the fathers. It goes deep into the consciousness of Israel, and I can trust that consciousness in its essential content. It is

said these narratives were written very late. I do not believe they were written so late as is alleged. We are told that these narratives about the Patriarchs were written down about the eighth or ninth century. I have often asked for the evidence of that, and the only evidence of any importance that I can discover is that these narratives are supposed to mirror the political conditions of that age in Israel. For example, the covenant of Jacob and Laban is supposed to mirror the wars between Assyria and Israel. Jacob's vow to pay tithes at Bethel is supposed to be inserted to support the payment of tithes at the calf shrine at Bethel. Those are the reasons given for saying that these narratives must be late. But where is the evidence that that is a true reading of the matter? Does anyone wish me to believe that any prophetic writer, be he a "J" or be he an "E," that any prophetic writer put into that story of Bethel, that story of Jacob's vision, what he did, in order to support the custom of going to pay tithes at the calf-sanctuary of Bethel. This prophetic writer is supposed to put this in in order to win the people over to paying their tithes to that calf shrine. You want to know how I differ from criticism. That is another point.

A NEWER SCHOOL.

And now a newer school has arisen, and a representative of that school, Professor Gunkel, of Berlin, writes a book to show that all this about mirrorings of these events is myth and shadow, and that there is no reference to any political event or allusion to anything that can be construed as political event in Israel's history that comes lower than the age of the early kingdom; and he carries back the formation of the early

stories of the patriarchs back to about 1200 B.C. Well, there is a change taking place, and it really takes away, in my judgment, the ground for this late dating of these narratives at that time.

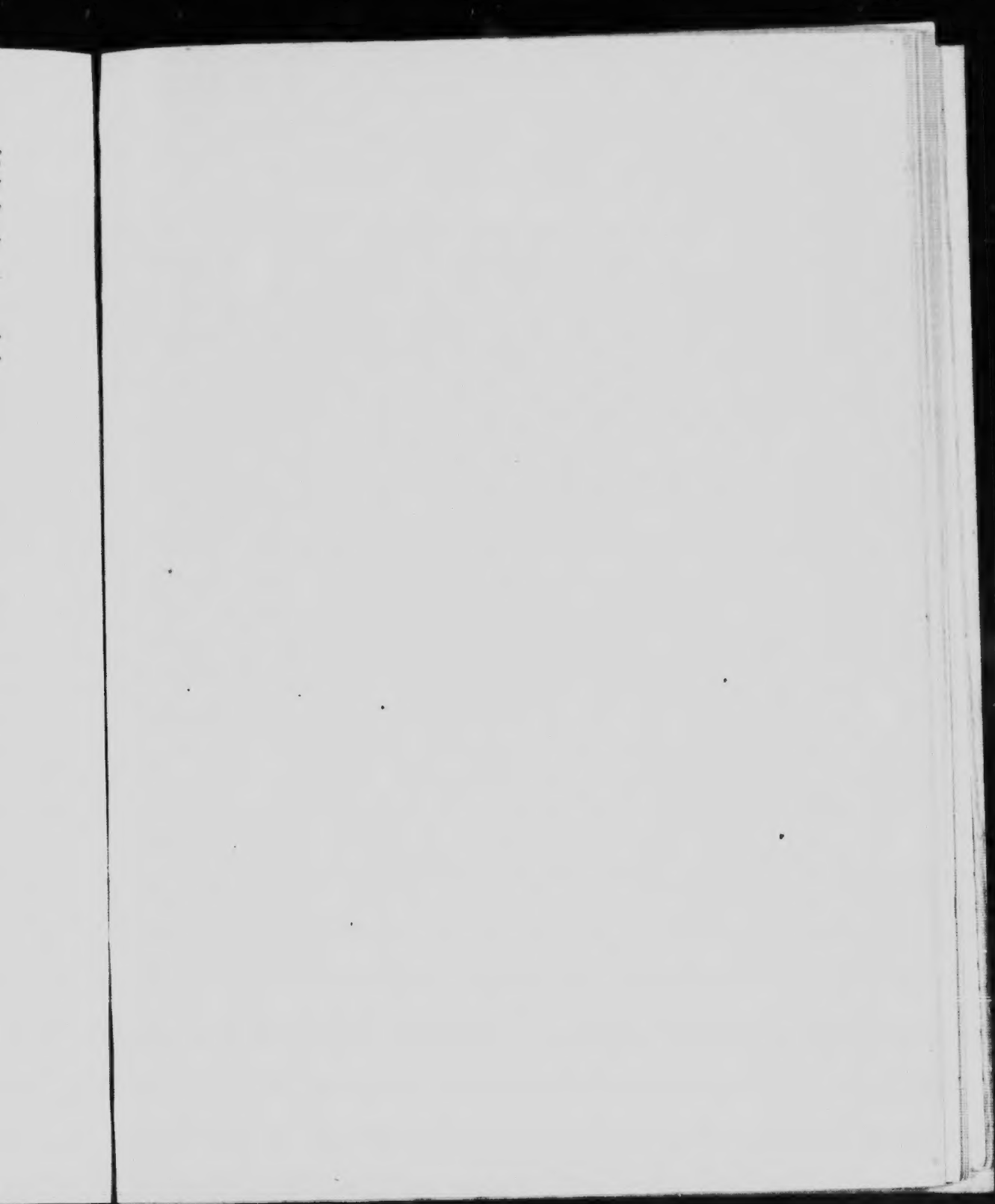
One word I was going to say on the idea of God in Israel. Now, Professor Jordan is very strong about that. He cannot believe that it is possible that Abraham or Moses at that stage had an idea of a supreme God; even revelation could not give it to him; and so that must be dismissed as legend, because Abraham is a believer in the God of heaven and earth, and Moses is represented as believing in a God of all the earth, and David is represented as believing in God as supreme. Now, that is what I call ruling our judgment in these things by a theory of religious development. Prof. Jordan says to me that I must not venture to judge about the theory of Israel until I have settled all the dates and literary questions about the documents; but when I ask, "How do you settle the dates, and how do you settle the order of the literature?" I find that it is largely through the theory of religion they do it. David could not have written those Psalms, and therefore down they go. And as to these stories, Abraham could not have believed this about Jehovah, and therefore those narratives cannot be true about him. It is the theory of religion that engineers the whole process so far as these writers are concerned, and that is why I am dwelling chiefly on the theory of religion rather than on literary questions, on many of which honest men will differ in opinion to the end of time. Professor Jordan called my attention on Friday evening to that saying to David, when they were driving him out of Jerusalem, "Go serve other

gods," and he argues from that, as many others do—it is one of the stock passages—he argues from that that David believed that Jehovah was a God just of that little nation of Israel, and that if he was outside Israel he was sent away to serve other gods. Well, when Professor Jordan made that statement, I asked him—of course, that is not reported in the newspapers—I asked Professor Jordan if he really believed that when David crossed the line and went over into Moab, he felt himself bound to worship Chemosh, or when he went over into Philistia that he felt himself bound to himself bound to worship in the house of Rimmon. I asked him that, and I did not get a satisfactory answer. Because people said that to him, it does not follow that David believed that when he left his own land, although he was separated, and mourned at the separation, from the temple and worship of Jehovah, therefore he was bound to worship those idols of other peoples. Not at all. Professor Jordan says again that long after David's time they were wrestling with those problems and saying, "How can we sing the songs of Zion in a strange land?" That is a proof, he thinks, that the Israelites believed that Jehovah was confined to the land. But take that 137th Psalm. Who doesn't see the meaning of it? These exiles were in Babylon, and their captors, their oppressors, were saying: "Come, sing us those songs of Zion of yours"; and they say, "How can we sing the songs of Zion in a strange land?" Does that mean that they had abandoned the worship of Jehovah in that strange land? That they never prayed to Jehovah? Never sang a song? I am from Scotland. We have songs there. Suppose some of our people were carried away captive into a strange land, and those captors,

those oppressors, came taunting and said, "Come, sing us some of your Scotch songs"; and we replied, "How can we sing those songs of our land, those songs of Scotland, in a strange land?" Would anyone draw such inferences from it as Professor Jordan does from these things? There is another point on which I differ.

And see there runs all through this matter a deep line of divergence between such a view of the matter and a view of revelation that rests upon the conception you have in the Bible itself. People say, "You have your presuppositions too. This man has presuppositions and does not believe in miracles, and so excludes this and that from the Bible; this other man has a presupposition in favor of the supernatural." But the difference is here. When I come with my belief in the supernatural in the Bible and interpret it, I am interpreting it along the line of the Bible itself, and therefore can be in harmony at any rate with the teachings of the Bible. When these other friends come with their denial of the supernatural, or at any rate with the adoption of a theory that at basis denies it, then they are bound beforehand to sweep out and reject the greater part of that history, because it is steeped in the supernatural from beginning to end.

I am sorry I cannot go any further. I shall say a good deal more, if I am permitted, to-morrow evening about the early part of the Bible, but I trust I have indicated in a sufficiently clear way the broad lines of distinction between these two fundamentally opposite views, and I have tried to show that it is not without some reason that one rejects the critical view and the arbitrary constructions connected with it, and adheres to the view which I believe is laid down in the Bible itself.





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